Vol. III. Numb. 21.

The EXAMINER.

From Friday *January* 30, to Monday *February* 2, 1712.

Beware of Counterfeits, for ſuch are abroad. Saffold's *Quack-Bill.*

Quin, quæ dixiſti modo,
Omnia ementitus equidem Soſia Amphytrionis ſum. Plaut.

Parva motu primo, mox ſeſe attollit in auras. Virg.

I Intend this Paper for the Service of a particular Perſon; but herein, I hope, at the ſame time, to do ſome Service to the Publick. A Monſtrous Story hath been for a while moſt induſtriouſly handed about, reflecting upon a Gentleman in great Truſt, under the Principal Secretary of State; who hath Conducted himſelf with ſo much Prudence, that, before this Incident, neither the moſt virulent Pens nor Tongues have been ſo bold to attack him. The Reader eaſily underſtands, that the Perſon here meant is Mr. *Lewis*, Secretary to the Earl of *Dartmouth*, concerning whom a Story hath run, for about Ten Days paſt, which makes a mighty Noiſe in this Town, is no doubt with very ample Additions tranſmitted to every Part of the Kingdom, and probably will be return'd to us by the *Dutch Gazetteer*, with the Judicious Comments peculiar to that Political Author: Wherefore having received the Fact and the Circumſtances from the beſt Hands, I ſhall here ſet them down before the Reader, who will eaſily pardon the Style, which is made up of Extracts from the Depoſitions and Aſſertions of the ſeveral Perſons concerned.

On *Sunday* laſt was Month, Mr. *Lewis*, Secretary to the *Earl* of *Dartmouth*, and Mr. *Skelton*, met by Accident at Mr. *Scarborough*'s Lodgings in St. *James*'s, among Seven other Perſons, *viz.* the Earls of *Suſſex* and *Finlatter*, the Lady *Barbara Skelton*, Lady *Walter*, Mrs. *Vernon*, Mrs. *Scarborough*, and Miſs *Scarborough* her Daughter; who all declar'd, that Mr. *Lewis* and Mr. *Skelton* were half an Hour in Company together. There Mrs. *Scarborough* made Mr. *Skelton* and Mr. *Lewis* known to each other; and told the former, that he ought to thank Mr. *Lewis* for the Trouble he had given himſelf in the diſpatch of a Licence, under the *Privy Seal*, by which Mr. *Skelton* was permitted to come from *France* to *England*. Hereupon Mr. *Skelton* ſaluted Mr. *Lewis*, and told him, he would wait on him at his Houſe to return him his Thanks. Two or three Days after, Mr. *Skelton*, in Company with the Earl of *Suſſex*, his Lady's Father, went to a Houſe in *Marlborough-ſtreet*, where he was inform'd Mr. *Lewis* liv'd; and as ſoon as the ſuppoſed Mr. *Lewis* appear'd, Mr. *Skelton* expreſs'd himſelf in theſe Words; *Sir, I beg your Pardon; I find I am miſtaken: I came to viſit Mr.* Lewis *of my Lord* Dartmouth's *Office, to thank him for the Service he did me in paſſing my* Privy Seal. Mr. *Levi* alias *Lewis* anſwer'd, *Sir, There is no Harm done:* Upon which Mr. *Skelton* immediately withdrew to my Lord *Suſſex*, who ſtay'd for him in the Coach, and drove away. Mr. *Skelton*, who was a Stranger to the Town, order'd the *Coachman* to drive to Mr. *Lewis*'s without more particular Directions, and this was the occaſion of the Miſtake.

For above a Fortnight nothing was ſaid of this Matter; but on *Saturday* the 24th of *January* laſt, a Report began to ſpread, that Mr. *Skelton*, going by Miſtake to Mr. *Henry Levi* alias *Lewis*, inſtead of Mr. *Lewis* of the *Secretary's Office*, had told him, *That he had Services for him from the* Earls *of* Perth, Middleton, Melfort, *and about Twelve Perſons more of the* Court of St. Germains. When Mr. *Lewis* heard of this, he writ to the above-mentioned *Henry Levi* alias *Lewis*, deſiring to be inform'd, what ground there was for this Report; and receiv'd for Anſwer, *That his Friend* Skelton *could beſt inform him.* Mr. *Lewis* writ a ſecond Letter, inſiſting on an Account of this Matter, and that he would come and demand it in Perſon. Accordingly he and *Charles Ford*, Eſq; went the next Morning, and found the ſaid *Levi* in a great Surpriſe at the Report, who declared, *He had never given the leaſt occaſion for it; and that he would go to all the* Coffee-houſes *in Town, to do Mr.* Lewis *Juſtice.* He was ask'd by Mr. *Lewis*, whether Mr. *Skelton* had named from what Places and Perſons he had brought thoſe Services? Mr. *Levi* alias *Lewis* anſwered, *He was poſitive Mr.* Skelton *had neither nam'd Perſon nor Place.* Here Mr. *Skelton* was call'd in, and Mr. *Levi* alias *Lewis* confirm'd what he had ſaid in his Hearing. Mr. *Lewis* then deſir'd, he would give him in Writing what he had declar'd before the Company; but Mr. *Levi* alias *Lewis* excus'd it as unneceſſary, becauſe he had already ſaid, He would do him Juſtice in all the *Coffee-houſes* in Town. On the other Hand, Mr. *Lewis* inſiſted to have it in Writing, as being leſs troubleſome; and to this Mr. *Levi* alias *Lewis* reply'd, *That he would give his* Anſwer *by* Three a Clock *in the Afternoon.* Accordingly Mr. *Ford* went to his Houſe at the Time appointed, but did not find him at home; and in the mean time the ſaid *Levi* went to *White*'s *Chocolate-Houſe*, where notwithſtanding all he had before denied, he ſpread the above-mentioned Report afreſh, with ſeveral additional Circumſtances, as that when Mr. *Skelton* and the Earl of *Suſſex* came to his Houſe, they ſtay'd with him a conſiderable time, and drank Tea.

The Earl of *Peterborough*, Uncle to the ſaid Mr. *Skelton*, thought himſelf oblig'd to enquire into the Truth of this Matter; and after ſome ſearch, found Mr. *Levi* alias *Lewis* at the *Thatch'd-Houſe Tavern*, where he deny'd every thing again to *his Lordſhip*, as he had done in the Morning to Mr. *Ford*, Mr. *Lewis*, and Mr. *Skelton*.

This Affair coming to the Knowledge of the *Queen*, Her *Majeſty* was pleas'd to order an Examination of it by ſome *Lords* of the *Council*. Their *Lordſhips* appointed *Wedneſday* the 28th of *January* laſt for this Enquiry; and gave notice for Attendance to the ſaid *Levi* alias *Lewis*, and ſeveral other Perſons who had knowledge of the Matter. When Mr. *Levi* alias *Lewis* was call'd in, he declar'd, *That Mr.* Skelton *told him he had Services for him from* France, *but did not name any Perſons. William Pulteney*, Eſq; who was ſummoned, affirmed, *That he had told him, Mr.* Skelton *nam'd the Earl of* Perth *and* Melfort. *Levi* alias *Lewis* appear'd in ſome Confuſion; for he had intreated Mr. *Pulteney*, not to ſay he had named any Names, *For he would not ſtand to it*; but Mr. *Pulteney* anſwer'd, *You may give your ſelf the Lie; I won't.* The Earl of *Suſſex* declar'd, he did not go out of his Coach, and that his Son-in-Law, Mr. *Skel-*

Mr. *Skelton*, had not been gone half a Minute before he return'd to the Coach, Mr. *Skelton* declar'd, That he knew Mr. *Lewis* by ſight perfectly well; that he immediately ſaw his miſtake; that he ſaid nothing to him but the Words firſt mentioned; and that he had not brought Mr. *Lewis* any Service from any Perſon whatſoever. The Earl of *Finlatter*, and other Perſons ſummon'd, declar'd, That Mr. *Lewis* and Mr. *Skelton* were Perſonally known to each other, which render'd it wholly Improbable that Mr. *Skelton* ſhould miſtake him: So that the whole Matter appear'd to be only a fooliſh and malicious Invention of the ſaid *Levi* alias *Lewis*, who, when called to an Account, utterly diſown'd it.

If Mr. *Levi*'s View, in broaching this incoherent Slander, was to make his Court to any particular Perſons, he has been extreamly diſappointed, ſince all Men of Principle, laying aſide the Diſtinction of Opinions in Politicks, have entirely agreed in abandoning him; which I obſerve with a great deal of Pleaſure, as it is for the Honour of Humane-kind. But as neither Virtue nor Vice are wholly engroſs'd by either Party, the good Qualities of the Mind, whatever Byaſs they may receive by miſtaken Principles, or miſtaken Politicks, will not be extinguiſh'd. When I reflect on this, I cannot, without being a very partial Writer, forbear doing Juſtice to *William Pulteney*, Eſq; who being deſired by this ſame Mr. *Levi*, to drop one part of what he knew, refuſed it with Diſdain. Men of Honour will always ſide with the Truth; of which the Behaviour of Mr. *Pulteney*, and of a great number of Gentlemen of Worth and Quality, are undeniable Inſtances.

I am only ſorry, that the unhappy Author of this Report, ſeems left ſo entirely Deſolate of all his Acquaintance, that he hath nothing but his own Conduct to direct him; and conſequently is ſo far from acknowledging his Iniquity and Repentance to the World, that in the *Daily Courant* of *Saturday* laſt, he hath Publiſh'd a *Narrative*, as he calls it, of what paſs'd between him and Mr. *Skelton*, wherein he recedes from ſome part of his former Confeſſion. This *Narrative* is drawn up by way of Anſwer to an Advertiſement in the ſame Paper two Days before: Which Advertiſement was couch'd in very moderate Terms, and ſuch as Mr. *Levi* ought, in all Prudence, to have acquieſced in. I freely acquit every Body but himſelf from any Share in this miſerable Proceeding, and can foretel him, that as his prevaricating Manner of adhering to ſome part of the Story, will not convince one Rational Perſon of his Veracity; ſo neither will any Body interpret it, otherwiſe than as a Blunder of a helpleſs Creature, left to it ſelf; who endeavours to get out of one Difficulty, by plunging into a greater. It is therefore for the ſake of this poor young Man, that I ſhall ſet before him, in the plaineſt manner I am able, ſome few Inconſiſtences in that *Narrative* of his; the Truth of which, he ſays, he is ready to atteſt upon Oath; which, whither he would avoid, by an Oath only upon the Goſpels, himſelf can beſt determine.

Mr. *Levi* ſays, in this aforeſaid Narrative in the *Daily Courant*, *That Mr.* Skelton, *miſtaking him for Mr.* Lewis, *told him he had ſeveral Services to him from* France, *and nam'd the Names of ſeveral Perſons, which he* [Levi] *will not be poſitive to.* Is it poſſible, that among ſeveral Names, he cannot be poſitive ſo much as to *One*, after having nam'd the Earls of *Perth*, *Middleton* and *Melfort*, ſo often at *White*'s and the *Coffee-houſes*? Again, He declar'd, that my Lord *Suſſex* came in with Mr. *Skelton*; that both drank Tea with him, and therefore whatever Words paſs'd, my Lord *Suſſex* muſt be a Witneſs to: But his Lordſhip declares before the Council, That he never ſtirr'd out of the Coach; and that Mr. *Skelton*, in going, returning, and talking with *Levi*, was not abſent half a Minute: Therefore, now in his printed Narrative, he contradicts that eſſential Circumſtance of my Lord *Suſſex* coming in along with Mr. *Skelton*, ſo that we are here to ſuppoſe that this Diſcourſe paſt only between him and Mr. *Skelton*, without any Third for a Witneſs, and therefore he thought he might ſafely affirm what he pleas'd. Beſides, the nature of their Diſcourſe, as Mr. *Levi* reports it, makes this part of his Narrative impoſſible and abſurd, becauſe the Truth of it turns upon Mr. *Skelton*'s miſtaking him for the real Mr. *Lewis*; and it happens that ſeven Perſons of Quality were by in a Room, where Mr. *Lewis* and Mr. *Skelton* were half an Hour in Company, and ſaw them talk together. It happens likewiſe, that the Real and Counterfeit *Lewis*, have no more reſemblance to each other in their Perſons, than they have in their Underſtandings, their Truth, their Reputation, or their Principles. Beſides in this Narrative, Mr. *Levi* directly affirms what he directly deny'd to the Earl of *Peterborow*, Mr. *Ford*, and Mr. *Lewis* himſelf; to whom he twice or thrice expreſly affirm'd, That Mr. *Skelton* had not nam'd either Place or Perſon.

There is one Circumſtance in *Levi*'s Narrative which may deceive the Reader. He ſays Mr. *Skelton* was taken into the Dining-Room; this Dining-Room is a Ground-Room next the Street, and Mr. *Skelton* never went further than the Door of it. His many Prevarications in this whole Affair, and the many thouſand various ways of telling his Story, are too tedious to be related. I ſhall therefore conclude with one Remark. By the true Account given in this Paper it appears, that Mr. *Skelton*, finding his miſtake before he ſpake a Word, begg'd Mr. *Levi*'s Pardon, and by way of Apology told him, His Viſit was intended to Mr. *Lewis* of my Lord *Dartmouth*'s Office, to thank him for the *Service* he had done him, in paſſing the Privy Seal. It is probable that Mr. *Levi*'s low Intellectuals were deluded by the Word *Service*, which he took as Complements from ſome Perſons, and then it was eaſie to find Names: Thus, what his Ignorance and Simplicity miſled him to begin, his Malice taught him to propagate.

I have been the more Sollicitous to ſet this Matter in a clear Light, becauſe Mr. *Lewis* being employ'd and truſted in Publick Affairs, if this Report had prevail'd, Perſons of the firſt Rank might poſſibly have been wounded through his Sides.

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